prices by Rs. 2/litre and Re. 1/litre respectively with effect from 15.2.2008 which is actually in the nature of a restoration of retail prices of these products of their price level operating before February, 2007. The Government has issued Oil Bonds and Upstream Oil Companies have also contributed by offering discounts on crude oil and petroleum products to partially compensate the under-recoveries of OMCs.

Despite the steep increases in international oil prices, the Government has not increased the prices of PDS kerosene during the last six years and of Domestic LPG during the last three years.

The prices of crude oil and petroleum products in the international market fluctuates on daily basis. Government is closely monitoring the international oil prices and will continue to protect the interests of consumers.

Risk to oil pipeline in Jharia, Jharkhand

592. SHRI MAHENDRA MOHAN: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the fire in the coal belt beneath Jharia town has become potential danger for the oil pipelines passing through that area;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) how many pipelines are passing through that area and how many pipelines face risk; and

(d) what efforts have been made by Government to save those pipelines from caving in?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) to (d) Based on the information made available by the oil Public Sector Undertakings, there is no oil pipeline passing through the coal belt of Jharia.

However, Indian Oil Corporation Limited's (IOCL's) Haldia-Barauni Product Pipeline (HBPL), originating from Haldia (West Bengal) and terminating at Barauni (Bihar) passes through Raniganj (West Bengal), Rajbandh (Durgapur, West Bengal), Asansol (West Bengal), Madhupur (Jharkhand), Jasidih (Jharkhand), Jhajha (Bihar) and Mokamah (Bihar). A 42-km. section of this pipeline passes through the coal belt area of Raniganj in West Bengal and this pipeline transverse along a route about 70km. away from Jharia.

IOCL's HBPL is safe and close monitoring of coal mine fire is maintained to avoid any untoward incident. Physical patrolling of the pipeline route is done regularly and a close watch is kept for any abnormal indications. Geological Survey of India and Indian Institute of Rock Mechanics have also been approached to get further information about coal belt area through which a section of HBPL is passing. Besides these, close interaction is also being done with Eastern Coal Field Limited to obtain the latest information about these areas.

Recommendation of GoMs

593. SHRIMATI SUPRIYA SULE: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Prime Minister has constituted a Group of Ministers (GoMs) to examine proposal of retail prices of petroleum products;

(b) if so, whether this group was set up to make recommendations to Government on this issue;

(c) whether recommendations have been considered whereas small hike in oil prices has been recommended to offset the huge losses being suffered by oil PSUs in the face of spiraling global crude prices; and

(d) if so, by when final decision in this regard is likely to be announced?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) to (d) Yes, Sir. The Government in November, 2007 constituted a Group of Ministers (GoMs) to consider the issues relating to prices of petroleum products. Based on the recommendations of the GoMs, Government has increased the prices of petrol and diesel by Rs. 2/litre and Re. 1/litre respectively with effect from 15.2.2008 which is actually in the nature of a restoration of retail prices of these products to the price level operating before February, 2007.

The global prices of crude oil and petroleum products have remained high and volatile since 2004. In view of this, the Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) are incurring heavy under-recoveries on domestic sale of sensitive petroleum products; namely petrol, diesel, PDS kerosene and domestic LPG. As passing on the entire impact of the steep increase in the oil prices to the consumers would have resulted in inflationary impact, the Government has taken certain measures to ensure that the burden was shared by all the stakeholders.

Accordingly, the Government has issued Oil Bonds and Upstream Oil Companies have contributed by offering discount on crude oil and petroleum products, to partially compensate the under-recoveries of OMCs as per the details given below:

(Rs. in crore)

Year	Oil Bonds issued by Government	Contribution by Upstream Oil Companies
2005-06	11500	1400
2006-07	24121	20507
Apr.-Dec.'07	11257*	15873#
TOTAL	46878	50380

*For Apr.-Sep. '07

#Apr.-Dec. '07 (Provisional)

ADB's endorsement for gas pipeline project

594. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Asian Development Bank (ADB) had proposed the Gas Pipeline Framework Agreement (GPFA) for India's endorsement in respect of the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) gas pipeline project;

(b) whether there has been undue delay in clearing the project; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?